Reviewer's report

Title: Comparing early years and childhood experiences and outcomes in Scotland, England and three city-regions: a plausible explanation for Scottish 'excess' mortality?

Version: 3
Date: 21 July 2014

Reviewer: Yoon Phaik Ooi

Reviewer's report:

This study examined the relationship between negative early years and childhood experiences and childhood health outcomes. There are several critical aspects of the study that need to be addressed.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Findings from the present study are relevant and interesting to those living in Scotland and England. How do these findings contribute to the existing literature other than using the logistic regression method? Why is geography of residence an important factor?

2. Methods section:
   a. This section needs to be reorganized and rewritten (with subheadings) according to Participants, Measures, Study Procedures, and Data Analysis.
   b. The hypothesis should be placed before the Methods sections, together with the goals of the study.
   c. Each of the outcome measures should be described and referenced accordingly. For e.g., What are Rutter scores and what subscales were used, and where is the reference? What are references for the Southgate Group Reading Test and English Picture Vocabulary Test?
   d. Data Analysis: This section needs to be rewritten in relation to the goals and hypotheses of the study.

3. The results section needs to be rewritten. It was difficult to relate the results to the goal of the study and its hypothesis. Also, from the title of the study, the focus is on Scottish 'excess' mortality but the way the results section is presented did not reflect this focus.

4. The discussion section is very short - the discussion of the findings seem to appear on page 14?. The authors need to discuss their findings - e.g., why was the hypotheses rejected? How do their findings compare to the literature/other studies? These discussion should appear before the strength and limitations of the study.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely...
related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.